

5.4


Apostrophes

Use an **apostrophe** ('):

- **For common contractions** (I'd, he'd, can't, didn't, hadn't)
- **In place of omitted letters or numbers** (Class of '07)
- **To express time or amount** (yesterday's newspaper, a minute's times, five dollars' worth of grapes)
- **To form possessives with compound nouns** (my mother-in-law's advice)
- **To form certain plurals** (two's, C's, and 6's)

Rules for Apostrophes and Possession

- To form the possessive of a singular word, add an apostrophe and an *s*. (girl's dress, gentleman's courtesy)
- To form the possessive of a singular word (of more than one syllable) that ends with *s* or *z*, either add the apostrophe after the *s* (Kansas' population) or add the apostrophe and another *s* (Kansas's population) depending on how the resulting word sounds. You could write and say *James'* or *James's*, but you would be hard pressed to pronounce *Ulysses's*! Thus, listen to how it sounds to see if you will add the apostrophe.
- To form the possessive of a plural word that ends in *s*, usually add an apostrophe. (girls' dresses, boys' behavior)
- To form the possessive of a plural word that does not end in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*. (women's club, people's voting habits)
- To form the possessive of a shared item, add an apostrophe and an *s* to the last item in the series. (This is Uncle Henry, Grandpa Tommy, and Aunt Judith's car.)
- To form the possessive of individual ownership in a series, add an apostrophe and an *s* to each item. (We read Isaac's, Tina's, Monty's, and George's essays.)
- To form the possessive of indefinite pronouns, add an apostrophe followed by an *s*. (Is this anyone's business but hers?)

 **WRITING TIP** *Apostrophes can be confusing! Yet, they do not have to be. Study these few basic rules concerning apostrophes, and you will do just fine when using them.*

5.4A**Showing Your Apostrophe Skills**

There is a need for at least one apostrophe in each of the following sentences. Some require more than one. Insert the necessary apostrophes.

1. Hed rather read last weeks magazine.
2. My mother belongs to the womens club.
3. Can you estimate this boxes weight?
4. We followed the mices path.
5. A secretarys job is not an easy one!
6. Uncle Jack, Grandpa Frank, and Grandmother Anna signatures are interesting.
7. She graduated with the Class of 05 from high school.
8. Is this somebody elses coat?
9. Have you painted the mens faculty bathroom yet?
10. How many *toos* did he misspell in the essay?
11. This is his father-in-laws radio.
12. Have you read the governors new proposal?

Show the possessive of each of the following. Write each possessive form on the line.

13. the watches owned by the men _____
14. the equipment worth fifty dollars _____
15. the medals that Rich owns _____
16. the contract of *they would* _____
17. the stamp collection owned by Chris _____
18. the house owned by Aunt Shelia and Uncle Tony _____
19. the lair of the wolves _____
20. the fort of the children _____